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IN RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL METHAMPHETAMINE PREVENTION WEEK THE HONORABLE JAMES L. OBERSTAR

MR. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.Res. 556, a resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that a National Methamphetamine Prevention Week should be established to increase awareness about methamphetamine and to educate the public on ways to help prevent the use of this damaging narcotic. Methamphetamine, or meth, has become the most dangerous drug problem of small-town America.

Meth is a highly-addictive and treatment-resistant drug produced from readily-accessible materials found in every local hardware or drug store in America. The explosion of this very destructive synthetic drug has already taken a brutal toll on children, families and the environment in my district in Minnesota and across the nation. Dealing with the enormous economic and social effects of meth – whether it is diverting tax dollars from already-strapped county budgets, or devoting manpower hours to locate and clean up remote meth labs, or treating meth

addicts at the local hospitals and clinics – consumes our society's resources at an astounding rate.

A daunting challenge of the meth epidemic lies in the very nature of this drug; it is a highly addictive substance that is considered to be the most treatment-resistant of all illegal drugs. Many people get hooked after only one use, and some recent studies have demonstrated that meth causes more damage to the brain than heroin, alcohol, or cocaine. Meth use not only modifies behavior in an acute state, but after taking it repeatedly, the drug also literally changes the brain in fundamental and long-lasting ways. Helping meth addicts is a very difficult and expensive proposition, because thirty days of treatment is often not enough. This all-consuming addiction is harmful not only to the user, but to that user's children, who are robbed of nurturing parents and a secure home; nationwide, approximately 3,200 children were present during the seizure of meth labs last year alone.

Our health care and social services systems need more funding for prevention and treatment, because only by breaking that cycle of demand can we bring lasting change to the entire community. Parents and educators play a vital role in encouraging young people to make the right decisions, because many children do not understand the inherent risks associated with experimenting with the drug. Preventing drug use is the first step to avoiding drug addiction, and H.Res. 556 will provide the opportunity to dedicate one week out of the year to engage students and children in discussions and activities that will underscore the importance of living a meth-free life.

Like many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, I am very concerned about the threat that the meth epidemic poses to local communities in my Congressional district and across the nation. Earlier this year, I introduced the Methamphetamine Eradication Act (H.R. 4763), which is a balanced, comprehensive federal approach to addressing problems related to meth abuse. As a Co-Chair of the Congressional Rural Caucus' Meth Task Force, I will continue to work with my colleagues in Congress to increase public awareness and to find a bipartisan solution to the meth epidemic.

The federal government must be a more effective partner in the fight to eliminate the threat posed by meth. By establishing a National Methamphetamine Prevention Week, we can give our local communities the opportunity to highlight their meth-related activities and take pride in their response to the scourge of this drug.